

Solutia may get Superfund money

Site in Franklin County may also get funds

BY TINA HESMAN
Of the Post-Dispatch

Dead Creek, a major contamination site in Sauget and Cahokia, finally may make it on to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund cleanup list.

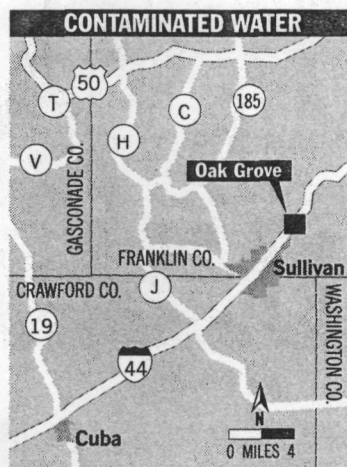
It was rejected for the Superfund five years ago when Solutia Inc. raised doubts about the accuracy of some data. Now, Solutia, the EPA, and others are presenting a united front to get Dead Creek on the list, which would make it eligible for federal funds to help pay for a cleanup of hazardous chemicals.

The EPA will make the final decision after a 60-day public comment period.

EPA recommendations for the Superfund also include Mississippi River wetlands near Sauget, and a former drinking water well in Oak Grove in Franklin County.

Fourteen other locations in 11 other states also will be considered during the comment period.

The area around Dead Creek — named for its slow water flow, which predated the contamination — that is being considered for federal funds includes the creek, three surface storage sites and three landfills. The Dead



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Creek site borders the old Parks College and residential areas. High levels of polychlorinated biphenyls, called PCBs, and heavy metals have been found in soil in the area and wetlands downstream of Dead Creek.

The wetlands are home to the black-crowned night heron and a dozen other endangered species. Water from the wetlands also feeds Old Prairie duPont Creek and flows into the Mississippi River endangering recreational and commercial fishing areas.

Solutia began digging contami-

nated soils from Dead Creek last November, said company spokesman Donald Ridenhower. About half of the sediment has been scraped from the creek and placed in a containment facility. The \$17 million project should be completed in the spring, Ridenhower said.

The second Sauget site occupies 312 acres along the eastern flood plain of the Mississippi, including land in Cahokia, East St. Louis and Sauget. Hazardous chemicals, including PCBs and metals, were found in the soil and ground water on the site and in river sediments nearby.

Wetland species and people who eat fish from nearby rivers and streams could be harmed by the substances, agency documents say. The area is a habitat for at least six threatened and endangered species, including bald eagles and snowy egrets.

The Oak Grove well, closed since 1994, contains dangerous levels of trichloroethylene (TCE) — a solvent used in paint removers and for removing grease from metal parts — and tetrachloroethylene (PCE) — a chemical used in dry cleaning. Both chemicals have been associated with cancers in laboratory animals.

No one knows where the solvents in the well came from. The Sullivan landfill, an automotive parts manufacturer, and two service stations were investigated as possible sources of the contam-

Fairview Heights settles federal suit alleging housing bias but admits no wrongdoing

City will pay \$275,000 to Texas developer

BY WILLIAM LAMB
Of the Post-Dispatch

by the city's insurance company without input from city officials, Mitchell said.

"I don't think we did anything wrong, that there should have been any kind of a settlement," Mitchell said. "But unfortunately, we don't hold the purse strings at this point."

Forte, of T.R. Forte Investments of Dallas, Texas, could

the project and the impact on the city's school districts weighed heavily in their decision to reject Forte's development plan.

The settlement agreement was approved Tuesday by Judge Michael J. Reagan in U.S. District Court in East St. Louis. It requires the city to:

■ Appoint a fair-housing com-

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und money to clean up Dead Creek in Sauget

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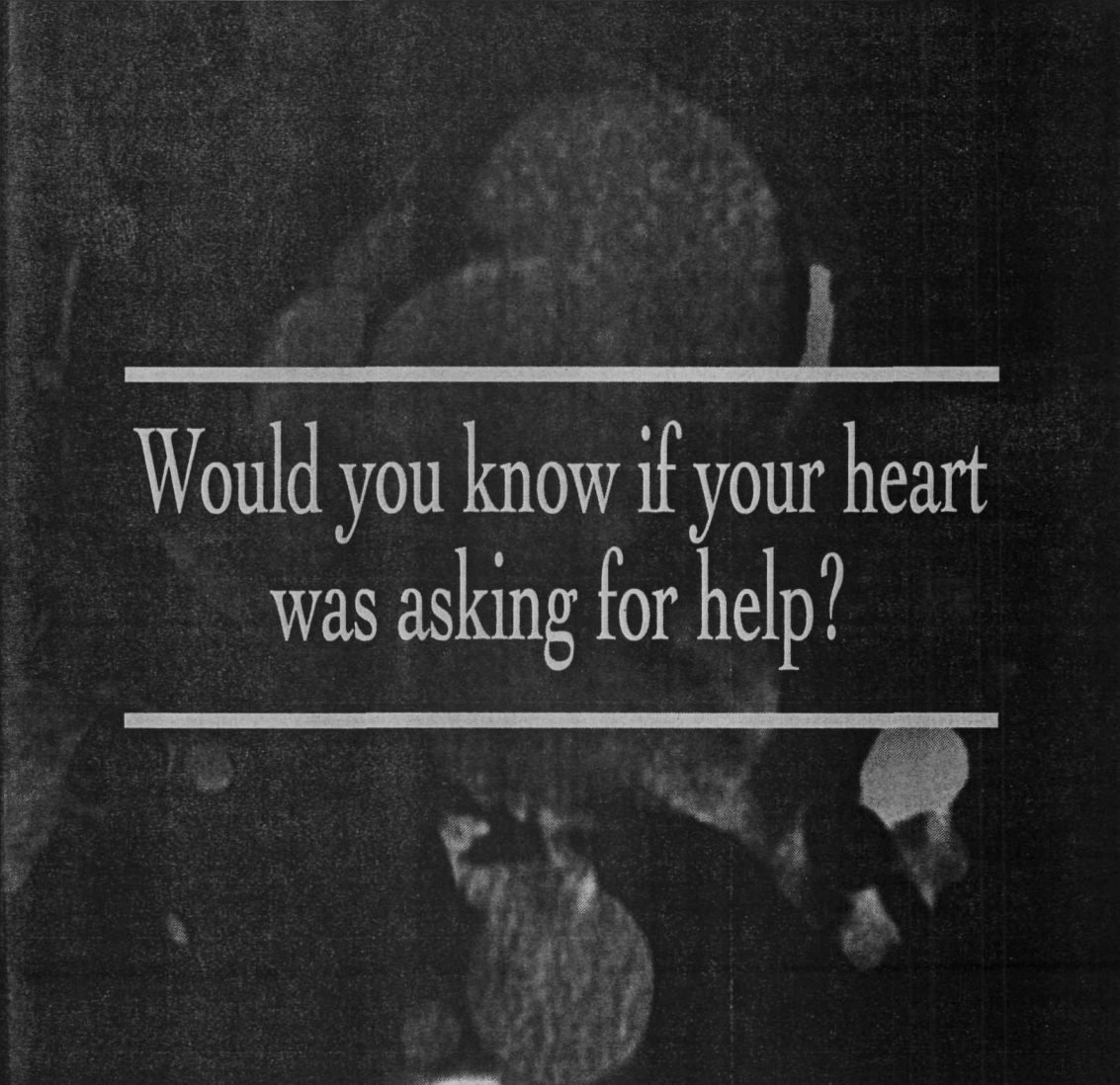
ination. The chemicals could not be linked to any of these potential sources. The EPA still is conducting tests to determine the source of the solvents and the extent of the contamination problem, said agency spokeswoman Hattie Thomas. "It's not going to do us

much good to clean up the ground water if the source of the contamination is still there," Thomas said.

Inclusion on the Superfund list ensures that the site will be cleaned up even as the investigation continues, Thomas said.

Although the tainted well is no longer used for drinking water, the solvents could leach into drinking water sources used by more than 6,000 people in the Sullivan area.

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